

Testimony rev

Keith Mullinar [mullinar@att.net]

Sent: Friday, February 22, 2013 2:36 PM

To: Debbie Melaragno; Daria F. Smith

Date: February 22, 2013

To: Appropriations Committee.

Re: Funding for Centers for Independent Living.

The Honorable Toni N. Harp
State Senator
Legislative Office Building, Rm. 2700
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

The Honorable Toni E. Walker
State Representative
Legislative Office Building, Rm.2702
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Thank you Senator Harp, Representative Walker and the Appropriations Committee for the opportunity to testify in opposition to the Governor's proposal to eliminate \$528,680 in state funding for the five Centers for Independent Living. This funding must be maintained as this small amount of money has an enduring and often life-long impact on many people with disabilities. The CILs provide invaluable independent living services for people with disabilities, not provided by any other agency.

The core mission of CILs is to offer a vast array of resources that include peer counseling, advocacy, independent living skills, and information and referral. However, CILs also provide nursing home transition to the community enabling people with disabilities to live and work independently. In addition, CILs provide computer skill development, youth transition, pre-vocational, housing services and lots more.

The \$528,680 cut will result in a loss of approximately \$105,000 per center which translates into the likelihood of lay-offs and the possibility of centers closing. This will result in depriving people with disabilities access to resources, services and overall much less opportunity to live, work and play independently in their communities. ***We can't afford to endure this cut at a time when other critical pieces of our deserved support system are also being cut!***

Since becoming a member of the disabled community, *and you have to live a disability to appreciate the impact*, I have come to realize that in my prior life, though well aware of disabilities in general, I was ill prepared for the actual experience - but, based on my own life experience and resources I have transitioned fairly successfully. Many others are not so fortunate.

I urge you to put yourself in the position of those served by the CILs and consider that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure - ***remembering that disability is not a matter of choice.***

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